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STEREOTYPES OF ARCHITECTURAL THEORY AND AUTHENTIC CREATIVE WORK

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Abstract. An analysis of spatial and semantic archetypes of religious structures by Hungarian architects, including Imre Makovecz, made it possible to further develop the idea concerning the creative work of this original architect, which was based on deep traditions of Hungarian culture. The genetic memory of the architect, which broadly extends beyond current theoretical concepts and schemes of architectural theory, formed the basis of the work of Imre Makovecz and other Hungarian architects.

Key words: architecture, theory, stereotype, creativity, genetic memory, designer.

1. Introduction

Architectural theory exists and develops along with architectural practice and the work of architects. Although diversity is appropriate in architectural practice and in architectural theory, the same applies to unpredictability, as the theory of architecture is tasked with describing, explaining, defining and introducing concepts while revealing trends, tendencies, practices and creativity in architecture. The process of moving from empirical perception to abstract intuition, which is necessary in the field of theory, leads to a certain perception (loss) of empirical material, its schematisation. It is an unavoidable part of the process of theorisation. It is of utmost importance not to lead to a loss of the essential characteristics of architectural practice in this process—the work of architecture, and thus the complex process and result of architectural creation.

Determining the main characteristics of a work of architecture takes place by using theoretical analysis performed with a set of research tools. The fundamental contradiction between theory and creative work is the analytical character of the former and the syncretism, susceptibility to suggestion and synergism of the latter. The process of the analysis of an architect's work can show us just how the qualities and theoretical conclusions can differ depending on the goal of theorisation, the tools used in the analysis or the skill of theorising. Oftentimes, in terms of external formal characteristics, a work of architecture or an architect's body of work as a whole refer to a certain style, phenomenon or movement. Theorists often cast a methodological net or stylistic matrix upon a work and are often satisfied with any formal convergence of a work and a style, labelling works of architecture or their very creators—architects. At the same time, some important, yet not immediately apparent traits (characteristics), as well as essential qualities of a work remain unidentified.

2. Basic Theory

Let us discuss a number of examples of Hungarian architecture, which architectural theory either considers as belonging to the general postmodern movement or does not acknowledge certain architectural

elements as essential in their author's work. According to the author, it is the matrix of style and methodological models that often erode the value of an architect's creative works.

The Hungarian Imre Makovecz is traditionally considered to be a postmodern architect, counting on his wings of organic architecture, particularly the anthropomorphic ones [1; 2; 3; 4; 5; 6; 7]. Imre Makovecz (1935–2011) studied at the Budapest University of Technology. His work shows the influence of Rudolph Steiner, Antonio Gaudi, Frank Lloyd Wright, Ede Lechner. Imre Makovecz's architecture is characterised as anthropomorphic in terms of its form and character. The architect himself justified this approach on the basis of the traditions of the Hungarians, which gave certain parts of buildings, particularly dwellings, the names of human body parts, which is typical for many other ethnic groups.

However, looking directly from a close distance and analysing his work along with an in-depth observation of its semantics makes it possible to dissect and read the internal significance and form of the architect's religious buildings and draw more in-depth conclusions concerning the work of this Master and produce significant knowledge, for instance in the case of manifestations of the sacred.

To those who have had the occasion to study a number of examples of Makovecz's work [1], the first thing that can be seen is the extraordinary manner of organising the space of the temple in the surrounding context. The areas around the temples of Imre Makovecz usually are not marked by any outstanding qualities. As on any street of a small European town located in a lowland area, practically all that they feature are planted trees, bushes and flowers, which hang from the fences of well-maintained small houses placed along the street. Behind the unobservable meanders of the street, the image of the life of the residents is painted, modest buildings of varying sizes and expensiveness, primarily from the second half of the twentieth century. A quiet atmosphere, pedestrians and children at play that appear from time to time—nothing exceptional or special.

Suddenly, behind the turn of a small-town street, we can see something completely different and unexpected, not only for this town, but for spatial art overall, as it goes beyond architecture. Yes, spatial art, for the form itself—more of a sculpture, its colour—decorative, extraordinary. The scenography of space is theatrical, the small details are not immediately identifiable as architectural—only upon closer inspection revealing themselves to be beings of unknown shape. These beings—not anthropogenic nor zoomorphic ones, but forms (morphs) that do not resemble anything from the world of animate nature from far away. They are wings (sometimes of a naturalistic sculpture), the trunks and branches of desiccated trees, or perhaps the horns of a deer, fish scales, slugs, winged humanoid beings (angels?). The bends of curved lines and surfaces resemble a body, rays of light and many other images—an entire series of real and fantastic spaces and shapes (Fig. 1).



Fig. 1. The archetypal quality of Imre Makovecz's architectural image.
Temple, design by: Imre Makovecz, 1996–1998. Location: Pest (original photograph)

The integral image of a site is composed not only of a building itself, but also of the entire visual space that the eye can see and that is around it, including discrete, traditionally modest buildings, which only highlight the extraordinariness of the temple with their background. However, it casts an intense light on the entire image of the average environment around it.

The environment of this extraordinary image becomes extraordinary in and of itself, taking on qualities in such a manner that for some time everything before our eyes takes on a completely different shade than an ordinary street of a small town and its temple. A sort of mystical influence begins its work here, to which, we feel, we have come late, or that it has stopped due to our presence, producing an impression that time has stopped. Time stays still and has stopped space along with it, space that moved along with the steps of time. The decorations are exposed. We reach an understanding that the temple has, in some unexplainable form, dominated not only the place, the space, but also events, time, dominating in the history of this part of the universe.... Somebody rode past on a bicycle, girls entered the coffee shop nearby—the world is divided into the one created by the Master and the world that exists in reality, both of them transcending each other.

Around itself, the temple establishes an order of things that only it can know in this microcosm. Something unseen penetrates space and time with vertical belts from top to bottom—these are not lines of time, rather, they are lines of consciousness that strives to triangulate coordinates in order to tie down, to explain, understand, to gain knowledge of this place, while simultaneously rationalising, analysing, comparing, it searches for the answer to the question—what is this? A Catholic, Greek-Catholic, Protestant temple? Just a temple? Both yes and no. It is both one and the other at the same time. Just a temple. Just a space. Just a shape. Just a mass of consciousness.

Something here transcends more than just the boundaries of Christianity, but also of faith in its traditional forms. Professional instinct and awareness draw some sort of—rather murky—primal faith. Finality, inevitability, the predictability of everything—this is what this place achieves.

The conscious strives to search for an explanation of that which has been seen and felt. Every line, every shape, every tactile sensation, every micro space, while amassing, it searches for support in previous experiences, trying to touch something already known. However, after some time everything can gradually be told apart and starts to exist within the mind as a separate and holistic image. The multitude of the details of this image creates the original image of surprise, of awe, which cannot be qualified in any way...

It is then that, suddenly, we are aided by remembering that the Hungarian people have not been in this place forever, that they are a nomadic people, who came from the distant Siberian and Kazakh spaces of their ancestors, who have preserved their spiritual and material culture. For instance, the Kazakhs call their people Madiyar, while Hungarians have names like Zoltan (Sultan) or Imre (Amir).

3. Result and Discussion

You start to understand that the dome built by the architect Gyorgy Czete, and which is actually an entire Catholic temple, placed atop a purpose-built hill, and which one enters by walking across a small bridge—is not simply an artistic, individual work by a Master, but a replication of the ancient image of a mountain and at the same time of the traditional dwelling of nomads and steppe peoples—the Kazakh yurt or an igloo—a dwelling-shelter made out of snow (the Khanty and Mansi peoples) [8] (Fig. 2, 4).

Indeed, apart from a purpose-built mound (mountain-earth), a dome-sky (the temple itself) and the connecting bridge, which is something else, which pieces together the form and content of the temple—there is nothing. The impression becomes stronger, as the entrance to the temple takes place straight away from the dome in our European tradition. Inside the church there is a completely open space of the dome, a modest post-Council altar, a cross, a tabernacle, pews arranged in a circle along the wall. There is also the level underneath the dome with other facilities, but they are not directly tied with the religious part of the church.

A similar semantics of the image of the temple can be found in the city of Pest in the temple built by Imre Makovecz, in which the motif of the mountain and the dome was articulated numerous times—in the large and small domes separated by a wall with perforated arches (Fig. 3, 5). This white, quite decorative wall is the only attribute of European architecture which could justify a reference to the postmodernist movement. Insofar as the mountain and the domes—by paraphrasing the yurt-tent, and the tower above the entrance—present a different archetype of dwelling of the Siberian peoples—the chum.



Fig. 2. Mountain-dome. Dome-sky. Church of Saint Ersebet, design by: György Csete, 1979. Location: Halásztelek, Csepel Island, near Budapest (original photograph)

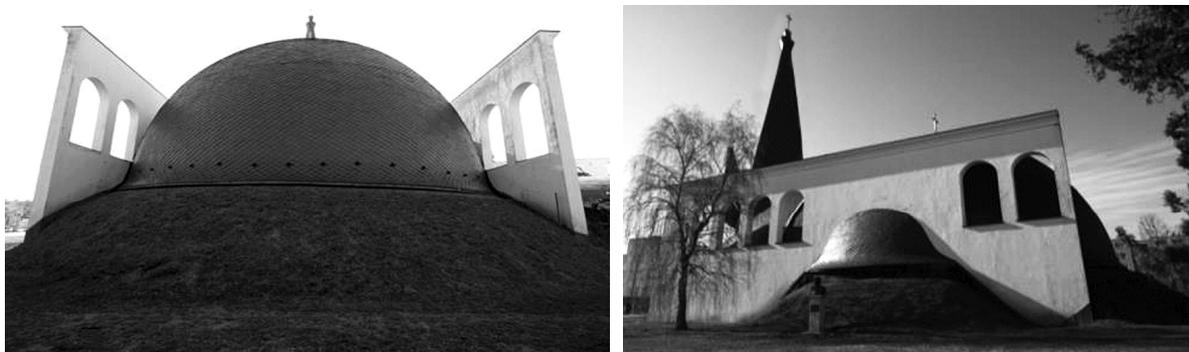


Fig. 3. Temple, design by: Imre Makovecz, 1996–1998. Location: Szazhalombata (original photograph).

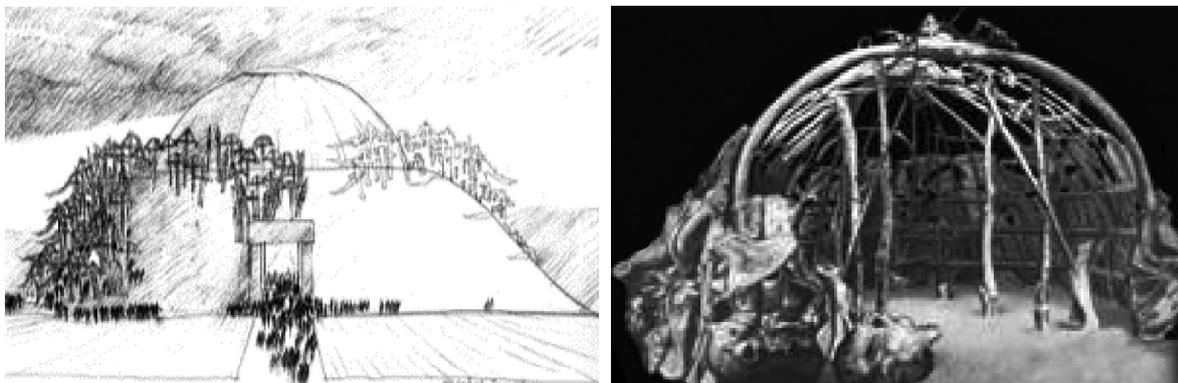


Fig. 4. Mountain-dome, design by: Imre Makovecz. Traditional dwelling of the Evenks and Khanty people (open source image)



Fig. 5. “Igloo” chapel, built out of stone. Pilisszántó Boldogasszony kápolna, design by: Imre Makovecz, 2006 (source: Imre Makovecz’s website); Embodiment (manifestation). Temple, design by: Imre Makovecz, 1996–1998. Location: city of Pest (original photograph)



Fig. 6. The dome and the cone. Traditional dwellings of the Evenks and Khanty people of Siberia: an igloo built out of ice and a chum (open source images)

Enlightenment of perception gradually incorporates rows of ancient images of the spatial language of Imre Makovecz: a mountain; deer horns, a chum; an igloo; a fish; fish scales; an opening (light) at the top of the chum; (“makodasi” of the Nenet people); the ribs of the vaults (“simz” of the Nenet people). Hence—the organic style and the leaning towards the spatial and visual understanding and perception of the dome (yurt) and tent-tower (chum) by Imre Makovecz—the hemisphere and the cone as archetypal geometric forms of ancestors. In this role these forms are also identical with the ideal forms of Christian temples—of domes and towers (Fig. 3, 5).

The content of the form by Imre Makovecz, despite its visual distinctness, also geometrically identifies such various different objects like a nomad dwelling and a Christian church. Among the ideal forms of these buildings there are the hemisphere (the dome) and the cone (the tent) (Fig. 6). One distinct shape of the tent (chum) is its central pillar, braced by poles that are covered with animal skins. This motif of poles that are tied

together, where the heavens and the earth are linked on the path of light and fire, is often encountered in various religious and lay buildings by Imre Makovecz (Fig. 6, 7).

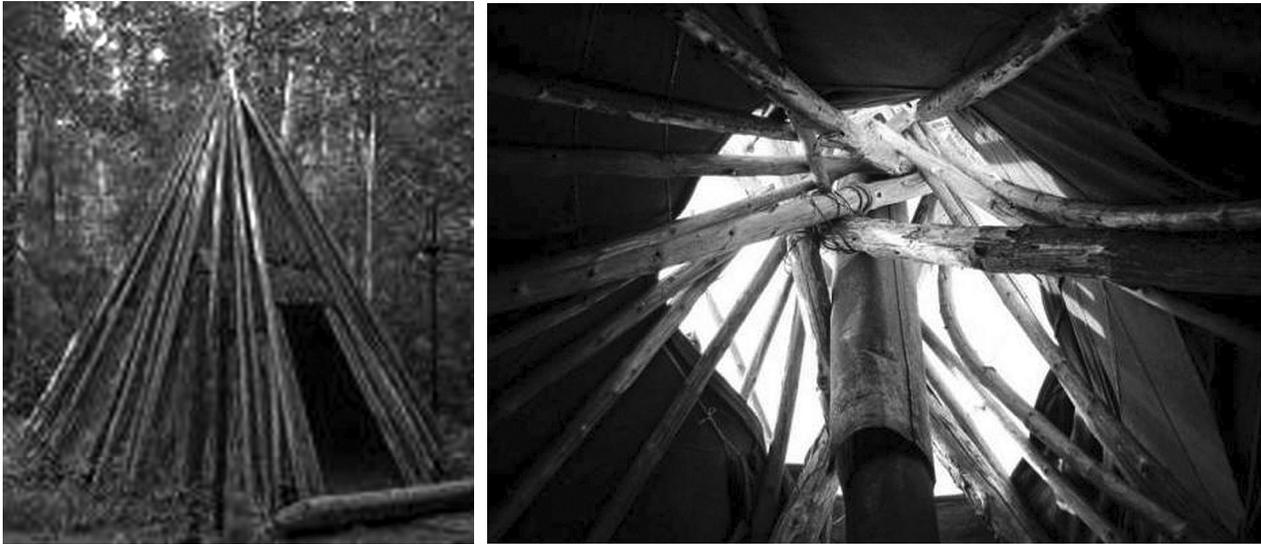


Fig. 7. Dome-sky. The cone and the chum. Traditional dwelling of Siberian peoples: structure and opening (open source images)



Fig. 8. Cone-chum. The image of the cone and the chum, drawing by: Imre Makovecz; Temple, design by: Imre Makovecz, 1996–1998.

Location: Szazhalombata, city of Pest; Catholic temple of the Holy Ghost, design by: Imre Makovecz, 1991. Location: city of Paks (original photograph)

Imre Makovecz, both in the interiors and on the outside of temples, often used timber—not only as a formogenic material, but primarily as a symbolic sign and image of the World Tree, the Tree of Life (Fig. 9). Similarly, he used images of fish (Fig. 10), deer horns, the central pillar of the chum (Fig. 11), the two main poles (boards) of the chum (Fig. 9). The image of the living (life-bearing)—in numerous forms and images of wings, human or angelic figures (Fig. 12), to the most sophisticated lines, pointing the lines of the human body or that of fish (the primary food of Siberian tribes), to abstract, archetypal forms, such as the gothic arch, which is similar to the shape of the tent (once again, the chum), equalising the abstract and the figurative—or

rather interweaving, thanks to architectural imagination, the figurative into the abstract and the abstract into the figurative, showing that the ideal can be expressed as an abstract and as a figurative image in a masterfully constructed context of form.

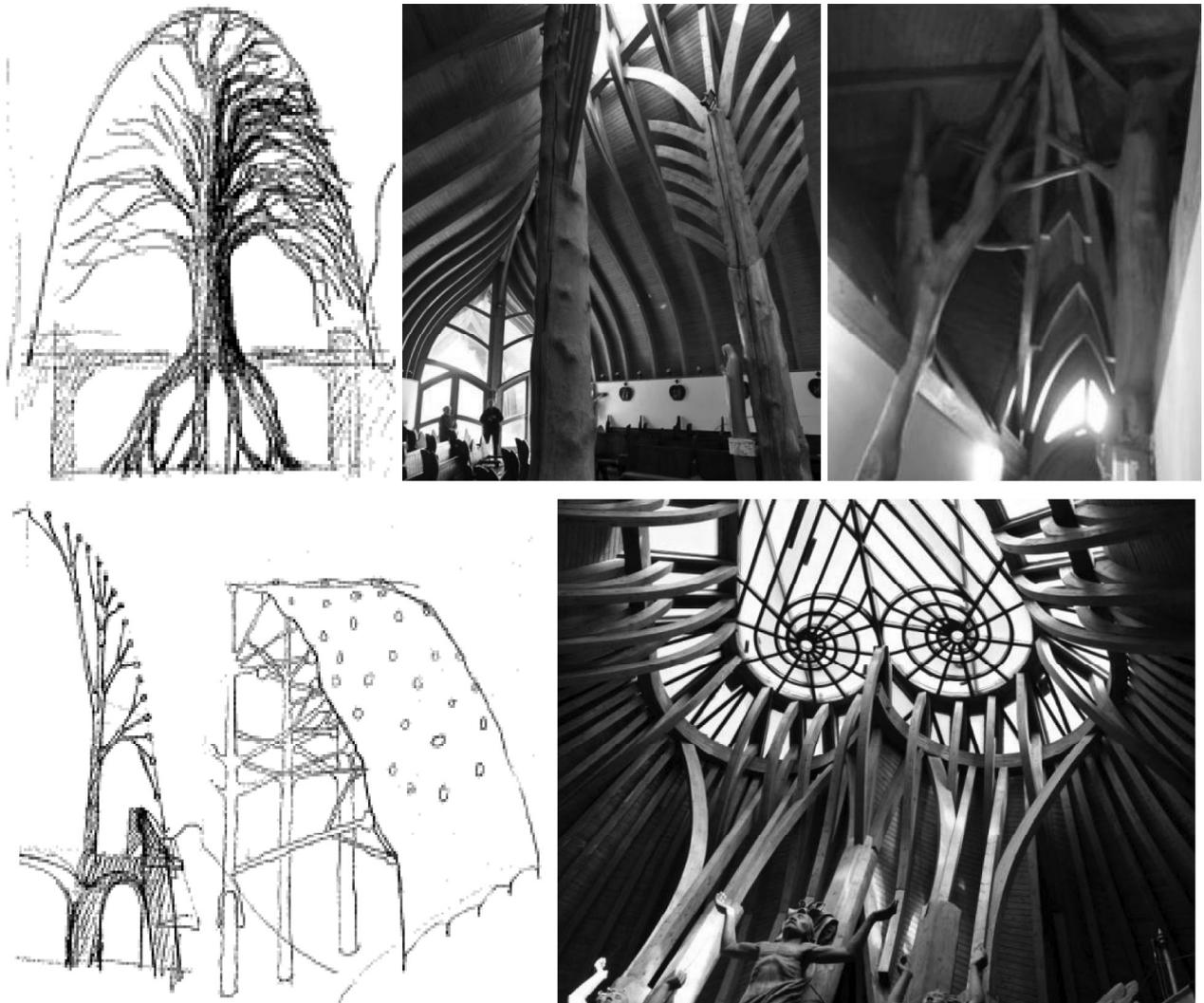


Fig. 9. The Tree of Life. The Axis mundi. Drawings by: Imre Makovecz;
Catholic temple of the Holy Ghost, design by: Imre Makovecz, 1991. Location:
city of Paks (original photograph).

4. Conclusions

The universality and value of the archetypes of the dwelling of the ancestors of ancient Hungarians (the yurt, the tent) and the holiness of the archetypes of the Christian temple (the dome, the tower) in the creative world of Imre Makovecz are present as equally important categories, representing the highest values—the spatial resources for the survival of nomads, wrought into religious forms of the Christian tradition (Fig. 13). It is in this that the everlasting preciousness of the creative work of Imre Makovecz lies—as he was an architect of not simply the already set postmodern movement with all of its identifiers (if it is so necessary to the globalising critique of contemporary architecture), but primarily of architectural work that was so deeply national that it spoke of something general, something that can be sensed and is close to completely different nations.

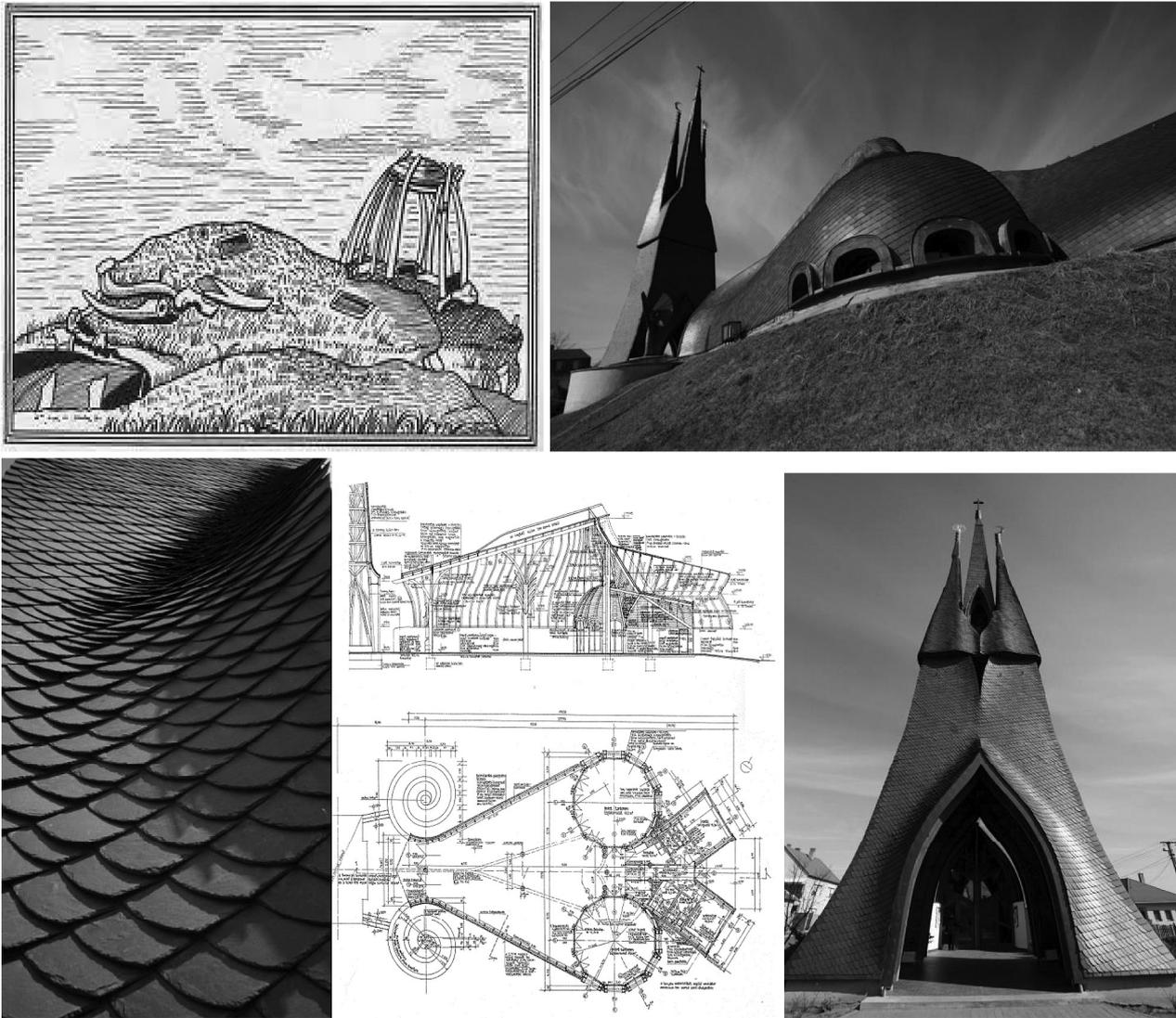


Fig. 10. The Fish. Traditional dwelling of the Evenks of Siberia. Catholic temple of the Holy Ghost, design by: Imre Makovecz, 1991. Location: city of Paks (original photograph)

The simplicity and clarity of thought processes and the creativity of the architect Imre Makovecz is so clear that it is sometimes unbelievable—it is difficult to believe that such a postmodern architecture, which usually likes acrobatics of complicated thoughts and shapes, does exist.

Searching for the sources of the creative language and the thoughts of Imre Makovecz shows their genesis through genetic precursor images, so distinct of the ancient history of Hungarian culture to the archetypes of modern religious architecture, demonstrating the strangest and most astounding paths of the manifestations of the sacred—through the genetic memory of the designer, emotionally and sensually combining mythologies and monotheism into a single, cohesive religious building.

Postmodernism—is usually a game, primarily a mixture of form and content, juggling semantics, irony, grotesque, freedom without bounds. Meanwhile, Imre Makovecz—shows us existence not only in the most direct expression, but also an ontology of space within its temporal and non-temporal continuity. Imre Makovecz—genetic memory, semantics of elements that are solid and have been tested for over a thousand years of human life, an archetypal quality, unambiguity and simplicity of form and creative freedom. The work of Imre Makovecz—largely exceeds the historical bounds of postmodernism, it builds a bridge of the conscious between the ancient memory of the nation that lives in his period and the present day with his pursuits of his own authenticity. Imre Makovecz personally showed us a tried and tested path in this direction.

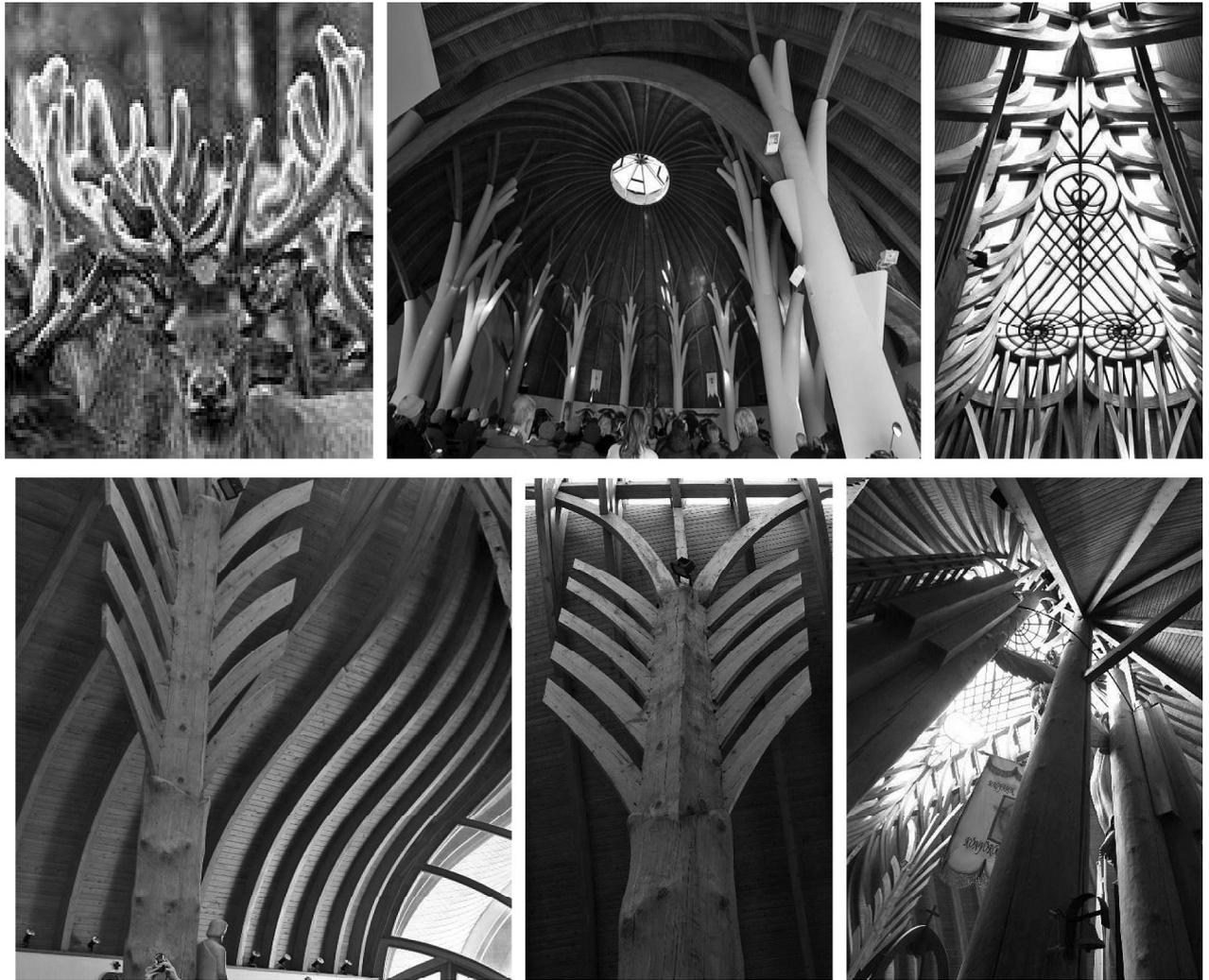


Fig. 11. Deer (open source). Catholic temple of the Holy Ghost, design by: Imre Makovecz, 1991. Location: city of Paks (original photograph)



Fig. 12. Beings (morphs). Man, Angel. Catholic temple of the Holy Ghost, design by: Imre Makovecz, 1991. Location: city of Paks. Arch. (original photograph)

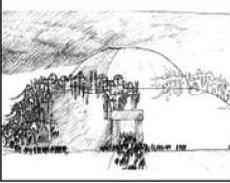
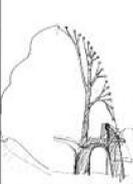
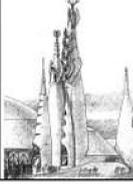
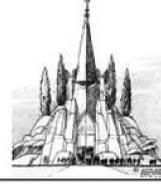
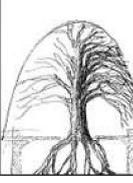
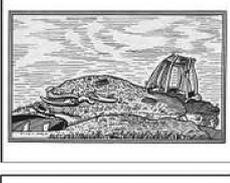
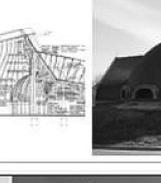
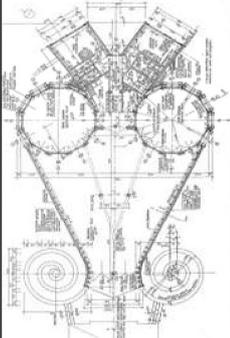
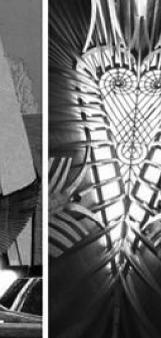
Categories-images	Prototype Archetype	Incarnation			
Mountain					
Dome-sky					
Plague					
Tree of life					
Fish					
Man					
Creatures (morphs)					

Fig. 13. Archetypical qualities of the religious image in the work of Imre Makovecz

This is why reviewing embedded stereotypes and assessments of architectural theory, as well as the search for new methodological approaches and discovering the depth of the authenticity of true Masters of architecture are so important.

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Юрій Криворучко

СТЕРЕОТИПИ ТЕОРІЇ АРХІТЕКТУРИ І АВТЕНТИЧНА ТВОРЧІСТЬ.

***Анотація.** Проведений аналіз просторово-семантичних архетипів сакральних об'єктів угорських архітекторів розширив уявлення про самотутню творчість архітектора Імре Маковеца, яка опирається на глибокі традиції народу. Генетична пам'ять творця архітектури широко виходить за рамки існуючих уявлень та схем теорії архітектури та лежить в основі творчості. Теорія архітектури існує і розвивається разом із архітектурною практикою та творчістю. Оскільки архітектурна практика відзначається різноманітністю, а архітектурна творчість і непередбачуваністю, то теорія архітектури покликана описувати, пояснювати, давати визначення, вводити поняття, впливати на практику, виявляючи тенденції і практики, і творчості в архітектурі. Процес переходу від емпіричного споглядання до абстрагування в області теорії супроводжується певними втратами емпіричного матеріалу, схематизацією. Головне, щоб у цьому процесі не втратити суттєвих рис архітектурної практики – архітектурного об'єкта, а тим більше – складного процесу і результату – архітектурної творчості. Суттєвим протиріччям теорії і творчості є аналітичність і синтетичність першої і синкретичність, сугестивність і синергійність другої. Нерідко, з погляду зовнішніх формальних ознак, твір архітектури або творчість архітектора загалом відносять до якогось стилю, течії, напрямку. Досить часто стараються накинути методичну сітку чи матрицю стилю на твір і задовольняються якимись нерідко формальними збіжностями твору і стилю, навішуючи ярлики і таблички на архітектурні об'єкти самих архітекторів. Водночас нерідко важливі, але непримітні ознаки творчості та суттєві характеристики об'єкта залишаються не визначеними.*

Універсальність і цінність архетипів житла предків давніх угорців (юрта, чум) і святість архетипів християнської святині (купол, вежа) у творчому світі І. Маковеца виступають як рівнозначні категорії-репрезентанти найвищих цінностей – просторових засобів виживання кочівників, що переплаваються у сакральні форми християнської традиції.

Ключові слова: архітектура, теорія, стереотип, творчість, генетична пам'ять, творець

[1] The author would like to express his gratitude to the Hungarian architect Gabor Csanady for the possibility of being able to familiarise himself with the religious buildings by Imre Makovecz and other architects in Hungary, in the company of the President of the International Union of Architects (UIA), Alber Dubler and professor Jerzy Uścinowicz.